



BROWNFIELDS CASE STUDY

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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Manitowoc Rejuvenates Brownfield As Part Of Harbor Area Redevelopment

The City of Manitowoc is redeveloping its downtown Lake Michigan harbor area to draw tourists and provide an attractive commercial venue for its citizens. However, some of the lots are not easy to redevelop. For example, the former WCI Commercial Refrigeration Division at 621 Quay Street burned down and left the downtown with a “brownfield”—an abandoned or under used property with known or suspected environmental contamination. City officials and community members decided to build a new library on the brownfield site, replacing an older and smaller library facility at another location.

Background

Downtown Manitowoc has a mix of commercial, residential, retail and industrial properties. When an industrial site closes down, contaminated soils and empty lots are often left behind.

The former WCI property has a long history of manufacturing operations. From 1900 to 1947, the site was utilized for the manufacturing of steamship

boilers and ammunition boxes. Between 1947 and 1991, a variety of companies used the property to manufacture commercial refrigeration products and systems. After WCI Commercial Refrigeration Division closed in 1991, Lakeside Foods, a canning business, purchased the property.

Cleanup

Lakeside Foods hired an environmental consulting firm to conduct an environmental assessment of the property. The assessment revealed soil and groundwater contamination from residual petroleum-related compounds, such as polyaromatic hydrocarbons, diesel range organic compounds (DROs), and volatile organic compounds.

Lakeside Foods paid for extensive remediation work at the site to address the contamination. Two separate excavations were conducted to remove the direct source of contamination. More than 2,000 cubic yards of soil (equivalent to filling approximately 200 dump

trucks) were removed. Several monitoring wells were installed to ensure that groundwater would also meet environmental standards. Structural impediments, such as sidewalks, underground structures and underground sewer utilities, made it impossible to remove all of the impacted soils. As a result, a deed restriction was placed on the property to notify potential buyers that some impacted soil remains on site.

Redevelopment

Community leaders formed a capital campaign committee, targeting local businesses and individuals, to help finance the new library project. The committee raised approximately \$2.2 million, which exceeded their original goal by nearly \$400,000.

In 1996, the City purchased four lots, including a small hotel, two retail buildings and the former WCI property, to build the new library. The WCI building was demolished in the summer of 1996, and construction of the new library began the following spring. The

Manitowoc Public Library was completed in September 1998.

Public/Private Partnerships

The DNR worked with the City of Manitowoc to determine a redevelopment plan that incorporated both environmental and economic considerations.

Lakeside Foods spent approximately \$160,000 to clean up the property.

The City of Manitowoc spent \$3.5 million to redevelop the property, including the costs for demolition, design and construction.

An environmental consulting firm provided consulting, assessment and excavation services.

An architectural firm designed the library so that soil contamination would not be disturbed during the building's construction.

Benefits

- The new facility forms a “cap” over the remaining contamination, which *protects public health and the environment*.
- The four properties were assessed at less than \$400,000 before the construction. Now, with the \$6 million construction of the new library, the *property value has increased significantly*.
- The *value of neighboring properties will increase*, with a projected 10 percent rise in assessed values.

- Higher neighborhood property values *will increase the city's tax income*.
- The construction of the new library *spurred renovations on nearby properties*.
- *Residents and tourists have come back* to an area that was once desolate and economically failing.
- The new development *restored the community's pride in the downtown*.
- The citizens of Manitowoc enjoy a *more spacious library* with a view of the Lake Michigan Harbor.

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Contact the DNR's Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment for more information regarding a “tool box” of techniques for brownfields redevelopment that can aid individuals or communities.

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